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REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of Claims 1-12, 38-41, and 46 of the subject application are respectfully requested. Claims 1 and 38 have been amended above and it is believed that the amendments place the subject claims in condition for allowance.

First Rejection Under 35 USC 103

Claims 1-5, 7-9, 38-41, and 46 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over US 6,139,675 to Druecke et al. (Druecke) in view of US 5,885,909 to Rudisill et al. (Rudisill). The Examiner offers Druecke as teaching water-based adhesives. However, the reference does not teach water-based adhesives that cure at 15-30°C, as recited in amended independent claims 1 and 38. Support can be found at page 9, lines 3-5 of the subject specification. Druecke instead discloses in Table 4 that the laminates were heated to temperatures in the range of 33-40°C to cure the water-based adhesive. One of the requirements to establish a prima facie case of obviousness is that all the limitations of the claim must be taught by the references singly or combined and this has not been accomplished.

The Examiner admits that Druecke does not teach a specific nonwoven structure and offers Rudisill to cure this deficiency. However, there is nothing in Rudisill that would cure the deficiency as to the amendment of claims 1 and 38.

The Examiner has not established a prima facie case of obviousness, and it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Second Rejection Under 35 USC 103

Claims 1-5, 7-12, 38-39, and 46 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over US 5,415,925 to Austin et al. (Austin) in view of US 4,588,457 to Crenshaw et al. (Crenshaw) and US 5,681,645 to Strack et al (Strack).

The Examiner considers that the spunbond/meltblown/spunbond (SMS) structure of Austin suggests the claimed structure because the first spunbond layer correlates to the claimed spunbond layer and the additional spunbond layer and meltblown layer correlate to the claimed second layer. SMS fabrics are well known and Austin merely discloses one of the methods for forming such a specific three-

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layer composite and does not suggest the claimed multi-layer sheet. Moreover, as the Examiner admits, Austin does not suggest a water-based adhesive.

The Examiner offers Crenshaw for teaching water-based adhesives. However, as noted in the Background of the subject specification, Crenshaw discloses that the latex binder is dried and cured using heated rolls. In fact, Crenshaw discloses at column 5, lines 5-6 that the latex binders remain tacky at low temperatures. This is directly opposite to the adhesives recited in the amended claims 1 and 38. Because all the limitations of the subject claims are not disclosed or suggested, a prima facie case of obviousness is not established.

The Examiner offers Strack as teaching that the claimed spunbond fiber has an average diameter no greater than about 8 microns. However, Strack does not cure the deficiencies of Austin and Strack as noted above.

The Examiner has not established a prima facie case of obviousness, and it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Third Rejection Under 35 USC 103

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Druecke and Rudisill, as applied to claim 1 and further in view of US 5,010,165 to Pruett et al. (Pruett).

Pruett fails to overcome the deficiencies presented above as to Druecke and Rudisill; therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Fourth Rejection Under 35 USC 103

Claim 6 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Austin, Strack, and Crenshaw as applied to claim 1 and further in view of Pruett.

Pruett fails to overcome the deficiencies presented above as to Austin, Strack, and Crenshaw; therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

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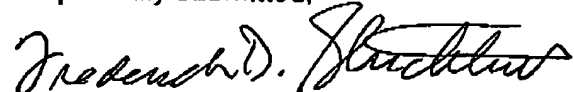
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CONCLUSION

It is believed that the foregoing is a complete response to the subject Office Action. Applicants believe that all rejections have been overcome and that the instant claims are now in condition for allowance. If any matters remain for resolution, please contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,



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